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ABSTRACT

When applying for federal funding of an academic project, the writing of the proposal is important and should include a description of the institution and its population, a statement of the problem to be alleviated, an outline of the proposed attack on the problem, a specific catalog of each necessary item, and an itemized statement of the anticipated budget. A project partially funded by Title III for 1973-1974 involved the establishment of an individualized, correlated reading and writing training program for about 200 students with low entry behavior at an open enrollment community college in the Los Angeles area. Although only part of the necessary funding was granted, adjustments in equipment and remodeling were arranged, and additional salary money from a special campus office was made possible. Staff training (4 faculty members, 10 teaching assistants, and 4 student tutors) and reading lab remodeling preceded the commencement of classes. Student success provided one measure of program effectiveness, while various evaluations suggested changes to improve the program in the future. (JM)

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THROUGH FEDERAL FUNDINGLAND WITH GUN AND CAMERA

A paper presented at the meeting of the

Western College Reading Association

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by

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THROUGH FEDERAL FUNDINGLAND WITH GUN AND CAMERA

To those who have never applied for federal funding of academic projects, the procedures may appear to be so mysterious and complex that the tendency is to continue to ignore this possible source of help. The purposes of this paper are twofold--to outline the steps involved in making application for funding, and to present the chronology of a Title III project written by two "first-timers" in Federal Fundingland.

How to Write a Proposal

While guidelines for specific grants vary and should be followed, there are some procedures that are generally appropriate in proposal writing. First, seek out the person at your institution who is responsible for pursuing funding. If no such person exists, consult with your administration regarding the delegation of this responsibility so that communication is established with the government agencies involved with the announcing and awarding of grants.

When you have been apprized of funding possibilities for the coming year, target the one that comes closest to meeting your needs. You may find that you will need to make application to several different sources in order to acquire various components of your project. Acquaint yourself with the deadlines for submitting proposals, and be prepared for a time lag of as much as a year from submission date to start of the project.

In writing the proposal narrative, certain information should be included:

1. Start with a description of your institution and population. Give pertinent geographical and economic factors, statistical data on ethnic makeup of your students, etc., stressing those aspects particularly applicable to the stated purposes of the grant. If you are writing only a part of an institutional package proposal, the person in charge of the whole proposal will probably do this.

2. State the problem you seek to alleviate. Be specific. Define the characteristics and size of your audience. Do not propose to solve all of the ills of your institution or your students.

3. Outline your plan to attack the stated problem. Define the period of the project. List the behavioral objectives you have for your audience.

4. Catalogue what is needed to carry out your plan, describing the function of each item and the reason it is a necessary part of the plan. Be sure to consider

a. Facility--Is there a present site? If so, is it adequate for the proposed project? Is remodeling necessary? Will you have to shut down present operations during remodeling? Are there other possible locations?

b. Staff--How many people are needed? What levels of proficiency must they have? Will training be necessary? Part time or full time?

c. Equipment and supplies--Is new furniture or blackout curtains needed? What machinery will act as teacher multipliers? Is hardware needed for implementation of new techniques? What diagnostic machinery or tests must be purchased? What kits or programmed materials are needed for individualization?

d. Travel--What conferences need to be attended? What other facilities or institutions should be visited for acquisition of ideas?

5. Build evaluation procedures into your plan. State the methods you will utilize to measure how well you met your behavioral objectives.

6. Figure the budget needed to carry out your plans. Remember to include repair costs, inflation and state tax additions to present catalog prices of equipment. Staff expenses should take into consideration fringe benefit costs, salary schedule increments and cost of living raises. In addition, you should anticipate the possibility of having to hire new staff members at a more expensive slot on the salary schedule to replace current personnel. Your institution may have a flat percentage that must be added to your figures to cover increased operating expenses incurred by your new project as it affects work loads in personnel, accounting and purchasing offices.

The budget will require your greatest efforts at crystal ball gazing. Funding agencies realize the difficulties involved in this item and will usually allow some changes in the allocation of monies in your budget when you get to the actual spending point.

Description of Project 16, Compton College, 1973-74

Institution and Population

Compton Community College is an open enrollment two year community college located in the southeast Los Angeles area, serving the communities of Compton, Enterprise, Lynwood, Paramount and Willowbrook. Approximately 55% of our students live in Compton, a community in transition. Latest state testing results show that 12th graders in the Compton Unified School District score in the first percentile in reading.

A student survey done in the Spring of 1973 at Compton College shows that 25% of our students are from families with less than $5000 income, and another 21% fall between this figure and $7500. Unemployment percentages are high. 70% of our students are Black, 15% White, 6% Chicano, 5% Oriental and 4% other. About 12% of those students entering Compton College eventually obtain an A. A. degree. A fair number of those gradu-

ating are foreign students. Compton College's foreign student population, mostly Iranians and Thais, is reportedly one of the largest of any community college in the country.

The average age of our day students is 23, and our evening students average 29 years. Because of family responsibilities, jobs, poor public transportation, lack of child care centers and a high incidence of poor health, absenteeism and dropout rates among our students are high.

The Problem

An analysis of placement test scores for the Spring, 1973 semester showed 35% of our native-born students scoring below 6.1 in reading. 2nd, 3rd and 4th grade reading levels are not uncommon. Foreign students are not included in these figures as they take a different test, one of English language proficiency.

Textbooks in use at the college are almost always too difficult for the students. For example, while first year nursing students average 7th grade reading level, texts assigned them average roughly 18th grade level.

A well-equipped and staffed Reading Lab on campus was running at only half- capacity because the reading courses were not required and not transferable. Service was available to regular classes, walk-ins, ESL groups and Consortium students (a very capable group of students selected for a program of transition to enrollment at UCLA.) However, we were seeking more ways to match the availability of assistance in the Reading Lab with the needs of the bulk of our student population.

The sequence of English classes required to move into transfer 1A was 10A (dictionary skills and sentence writing), and 12 (paragraph and essay writing). Placement was determined by an evaluation of a writing sample done the first week of school. The reading classes consisted of 9A and 9B, two semesters of survival skills (notetaking, handling textbooks, taking tests) and general reading skills.

Quite by chance, some students took 10A and 9A concurrently, and

Larry Jett, one of the 10A instructors, and I noticed that the students we shared seemed to be making much better progress than those who were just taking one of the courses. After looking at our course outlines, we found that they correlated in many respects. We decided that if we formalized a composite course we might be providing a better opportunity for students in need of remediation to improve skills. We also hoped to lower the dropout rate. Thus was conceived the idea of Project 16.

Following the steps outlined in the first section of this paper, we wrote and planned a program for 1973-74, utilizing the expertise of our institutional Instructional Technologist, Dean of Instruction, and Program Planner and Developer. We also consulted with our Purchasing, Maintenance and Personnel offices, as well as with outside sources including vendors, remodelers and college placement centers.

The Plan

Title III funding for 1973-74 was requested for the establishment of a program to provide individualized reading and writing training for students with extremely low entry behavior. The project was designed to serve approximately 200 students. Entry into this class would be determined by a combination of scores on the Stanford Achievement Test (Advanced, Paragraph Meaning), which measures reading comprehension, and on a written essay sample.

The curricula of remedial English and remedial reading classes were revised so that they correlated with and reinforced each other in a one semester, 7 hours weekly core program of 3 English lectures, 2 reading lectures, 1 reading lab and 1 tutoring session. It was proposed that at the successful completion of the course, students would be able to perform the following tasks:

> Follow written and spoken directions; discuss(orally and in written form) proper procedures in studying; use the dictionary, card-catalog, and thesaurus; recognize main ideas and complete sentences; apply basic essentials of grammar necessary for accurate written expression; distinguish fact from opinion; draw conclusions; apply context clues to approximate word meanings; participate in discussions; select

appropriate standards of usage for various situations; utilize textbook aids such as glossary, index, summary, appendix and type styles; take notes from auditory and visual sources; mark printed matter; and follow efficient procedures in test-taking.

These skills would be taught by instructors in a variety of classroom activities. The combined course would avoid redundancy of instruction and save student time in class. This time would be utilized in one hour weekly individualized tutoring sessions with Teaching Assistants possessing degrees or enrolled in graduate programs. A summer workshop would be held to train personnel in specific areas pertinent to the program.

Staff

The plan was approved, but only a fraction of the necessary funding was granted. We reviewed our priorities and decided that some cuts could be made in equipment and remodeling, but that adequate staffing was critical. Enough additional salary monies were obtained from Project Hope, our campus Special Services Office, to make our program viable.

Since, because of other commitments, neither of the project writers could carry a full load of 5 project classes, another reading teacher and English teacher joined the staff. They, too, had responsibilities other than the project sections they instructed.

Ten T.A.'s with varied backgrounds in counseling, English, reading and instructional technology were hired to do the individualized tutoring. Their duties included administering diagnostic tests and planning programs of remediation for each of their 20 tutees. In addition to discussing test results with tutees, selecting and preparing materials, and providing recycle tutoring in specific subject matter, T.A.'s were responsible for recording anecdotal information on each student's progress.

Four student tutors who had successfully completed the 9A and 9B reading classes were employed in doing catch-up tutoring for students who had been absent. They also helped with equipment setup, record-keeping, test-correcting, duplicating of materials, and serving walk-in traffic.

The T.A.'s and student tutors were part time employees, working 20 and 15 hours, respectively, per week.

One full-time T.A. was responsible for teaching small groups, assisting in the lab sessions, producing materials, helping with secretarial tasks and running a reading test service for other departments.

Coordinating 15 paraprofessionals and 4 instructors, all of whom had varying time schedules and commitments, was an extremely difficult task, but one we tried to accomplish with staff meetings--either large group or special segments, depending on the information being dispensed.

Training

The entire staff was involved in an intensive summer workshop covering areas such as learning disabilities, characteristics of remedial urban students, diagnostic testing, remedial reading teaching methods, counseling techniques, evaluation of materials, course content, and the selection of appropriate machinery for conveying material to students.

At the onset of the workshop, a pretest was given to determine strengths and weaknesses in the backgrounds of the various trainees. Based on the results of the pretest, experiences were scheduled to teach new skills where necessary. Games and simulation were included in the training. T.A.'s who showed expertise in the areas of counseling, testing, behavioral objectives writing, and needs and characteristics of various ethnic groups made presentations to the whole group, including instructors and student tutors. An extensive library on reading and language problems was provided for the use of the participants.

Training was given in the administration of tests to be utilized. The Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test, Level II is used to ferret out a student's problems in various skills areas. An analysis sheet has been devised to enable the T.A. to relate the subtest scores to particular types of learning problems, thus suggesting specific kinds of remediation.

The Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test was used to get a quick predictive score on students, but we have found it to be too culture-biased for our needs. (We got scores in the 50's on people who are functioning quite well in the working world.)

The Keystone Telebinocular is administered to test for eye problems. We have rewritten the instruction booklet so that it is easier to use.

The Goldman-Fristoe-Woodcock Test of Auditory Discrimination is used to determine an individual's differing ability to hear speech sounds in a quiet and a noisy environment. Results may suggest modifications needed in a student's surroundings in order for him to learn efficiently.

A checksheet was utilized to ensure that all T.A.'s and student tutors involved in the training workshop had practiced all the activities that were essential for functioning appropriately on the job.

Remodeling

One end of the existing Reading Lab was partitioned off to create an area for six tutoring booths and a connecting corridor. Access to this area is provided by a separate door so that classes in the lab are not disturbed by tutoring traffic. Because of anticipated lighting and ventilation problems, we did not put doors on the booth walls opening onto the corridor. However, we specified standard-sized openings in these walls so that we could hang doors on the frames if we decided to do so at a later date to cut down on noise. The "acoustical walls" are not really doing the job of absorbing voices that we had hoped they would.

Remodeling is an "if-y" proposition and some problems cannot be completely resolved. It is critical to be on the site during the remodeling process, no matter how odd the hour, if you want to get what you planned. One partition wall had to be torn out and put back three times before it met the specifications we had contracted for.

We were limited to six booths by available space, but we reasoned that this number would be sufficient for 10 T.A.'s who had varied work

hours. We found that there were jamups at key hours, however, so it was necessary to establish a schedule for occupancy of the booths.

Techniques

Our lab is endowed with a great variety of machinery and materials to meet virtually every need. In addition to commercial software, we have a prescriptive file cabinet in which lessons on many different skills, on many different levels, can be quickly located.We have established a card index system cataloging materials appropriate to skills needs. We believe strongly, however, in "just reading" on a self-selective basis, and we provide a variety of paperbacks from which to choose. We use machinery only when it does the job better than print.

One of our more innovative techniques is the use of the Language Experience Approach with cameras. The student is loaned a camera and asked to take slide pictures of whatever interests him. After the slides are developed, they are projected for the T.A. and the tutee describes them. The tutee's description is recorded and transcribed into print. His typed comments become his reading lesson. Because it is in his words, there is no problem with unknown vocabulary and lack of experiential background.

Procedural Problems

One of our biggest problems first semester was that students were not able to be scheduled for their tutoring hours until after they arrived in class. Since many of them registered late, and others did not arrive in Project 16 classes until after they had been sorted out of other English classes, great numbers of students lost several weeks of tutoring. We solved this problem second semester by getting permission to place a table at the end of the registration line and assigning a student's tutoring hour on a grid as he went past us. At the same time, we solved a first semester geographical problem by giving the student informational materials.

Unfortunately, the English and Reading teachers were physically separated by being housed in different locations on campus. Not only did

this make communication difficult, but it was hard for some students to see the connection between the various parts of the course. Although, for example, we were making great efforts to be teaching finding the main idea in the reading classes while the English teachers were dealing with writing topic sentences, and the T.A.'s were reinforcing in the tutoring sessions, some students were unable to synthesize the experiences. Also, several weeks into the first semester, we discovered some students who were only going to one or two of the three parts of the course because they didn't know the other parts existed.

As the student stopped at our table during registration for second semester, we filled out a Project 16 schedule slip that listed all the components and their days, hours and rooms. This slip was stapled to the student's regular registration slip and stored in his wallet. We also gave the student a map showing where he had to go for the different parts of the program. These two simple items made an immense improvement in the problem of getting students organized second semester.

Evaluation

Written into our proposal was a list of possible evaluative procedures, of which we would pick at least three: pre and post standardized reading testing, pre and post writing samples, student grades, anecdotal records, observation, and evaluations by students and T.A.'s. We also hoped to cut dropout rates.

T.A.'s were asked to evaluate the training workshop. While they felt that the overall training was good, they believed that they were given too much theory on the development of language and reading skills, and not enough practice in specific techniques or recipes. Even though most of them were graduate level, several with Master's in fields other than reading, it was impossible for them to synthesize all that was thrown at them and make them into "instant reading specialists" in two weeks time. Based on these comments, additional training was done at weekly meetings and it

was more effective because it was relevant to their current problems. A video taping system was utilized to produce training materials for techniques that hadn't been mastered in lectures during the summer workshop. For example, a tape was made showing the reading specialist and a student working with the Fernald Technique, a multi-modality method successful with many learning disability cases.

One measure of the effectiveness of the program was student success in semester grades. There was usually little disagreement between the marks suggested by the English teacher and the reading teacher for a particular student. T.A.'s wrote summaries of the progress of each of their tutees, and this input was fed into the grading system and was often the deciding factor. Most of the students who stayed in the program did well enough to move up to the next level in English. A few moved directly into 1A classes.

However, despite all our supportive efforts, a number of students did not complete the program, and we do not feel that we cut the dropout rate appreciably. We cannot be more definitive than that because although we have exact figures of from 34% to 60% drops in various classes in the project first semester, the only figures available from previous semesters are from census week on (4th week) and they are not true drop rates.

We attempted to call students who stopped coming to classes, and found it largely unproductive, yielding no answers or disconnected phones. We are accepting the fact that there are some hard realities in the lives of our students that we have no control over, and cannot change, and that we cannot be held accountable for in an analysis of student contact hours.

Student evaluations indicated that they thought the class had helped them succeed in other classes or in their jobs by a margin of 4 to 1. The same percentage of students stated they would take another combination class like this one if it were offered at the English 12 level. By a ratio of 6 to 1, students said they would advise a friend to take the course.

Analysis of pre and post scores on the Stanford Achievement Test

indicated average growth of 1.06 years during the first semester. Expected growth was .45 years, based on a 4½ month semester.

Plans for next year call for a slightly different setup. The project was too big, with 19 people involved, to be run smoothly by a part-time director. Because of financial limitations, the director also was required to teach 3 classes and coordinate the Reading Lab's other services. Other Project 16 faculty members were responsible for running the newspaper and being assistant director of student activities. One instructor was part-time and had obligations at another institution. Just finding an hour when all these capable people were free to meet was a major, ongoing problem.

In addition, we think that, for many remedial students, a 6 unit, 7 hour class is too big a goal to be attainable. If they were having problems in one part of the course, they tended to drop out of the whole thing.

Therefore, in the future we plan to run the English classes and the reading classes concurrently, with the student signing up for both, and with the tutoring as part of the reading configuration since it is located in the same facility. With this arrangement, the instructors can still be working with course outlines reinforcing each other's classes, but there will not be the need for the close communication and meetings necessary this year. We will be able to be more flexible in providing for current needs in our classes and won't feel tied to deadlines in covering material because the other segment of the project needs to have us at a certain place in the course at a set time.

In the same way, students will have a more flexible arrangement. If they cannot cope with the whole package, they will be able to withdraw from one class and still receive credit from the other class if they continue to attend and perform adequately.

Notwithstanding these changes, we feel that Project 16 has been a success. Evaluation is designed to improve programs, and change is a measure of effective evaluation.